

Odor-eater starts cutting it in Camas

Fort James' new equipment on the job, but some odor to stay

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CAMAS — For more than 100 years, they've been making paper here. For all that time, it's smelled bad.

Monday, \$9.5 million worth of odor-reduction equipment went on line at the giant Fort James paper mill intended to make the smelly operation a better neighbor.

But any Camas residents hoping for a dramatic change may be disappointed. That's because while the equipment is expected to strip 80 percent to 90 percent of

the smelly sulfur molecules from the water coming from the mill, it won't completely eliminate the odor. Neither will it affect the smell from emissions already hanging around in the mill's cooling ponds. How long it might take for old, untreated organic sulfur compounds to dissipate is uncertain.

"It could be a few months," Jim Cadd, mill manager, said Monday.

A year ago, when the project was announced, mill officials said the remaining smell would not be as noticeable and would not carry as far, once the equipment was operational. The odor, they said, would smell more like musty mushrooms.

Cadd said the new equipment will continue in start-up mode for three to four months, as techni-

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Company spends \$45 million on environmental issues

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cians work to improve the reliability of the processes, which convert water to steam and strip out the offending molecules.

"Even after that, there will be times that it might go off line for modifications or repairs," Cadd said. "(Water) flow variations may also affect the operation."

Fort James is installing the equipment as part of a \$45 million

investment in projects to deal with environmental issues. Installation began in April. For the past several weeks, mill technicians have been testing the equipment.

The company also is spending \$29.5 million to eliminate elemental chlorine from its wood pulp bleaching processes. Two of three bleach lines at the mill will be converted to use chlorine dioxide. The other will be converted to use oxygen and peroxide.

The Fort James mill employs about 1,460 people and produces 1,600 tons of paper a day, with 70 percent made into white communication papers and 30 percent into towel and tissue products.